



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION 10
1200 Sixth Avenue
Seattle, WA 98101

SEP 9 2004

Reply To
Attn Of: OW-135

Barry Burnell, Administrator
Department of Environmental Quality
1410 North Hilton
Boise, ID 83706-1255

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SEP 13 2004

Re: Approval of Nutrient (Phosphorus), Dissolved Oxygen, Sediment and Temperature TMDLs for the Snake River - Hells Canyon Reach

Department of Environmental Quality
State Water Quality Division

Dear Mr. Burnell:

Following our review and evaluation of the Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) developed jointly by Idaho Department of Environmental Quality (IDEQ) and Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (ODEQ) and submitted by IDEQ for the Snake River Hells Canyon Reach (HUC numbers 17050201, 17060101, 17050115, 17050103), the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Region 10 is pleased to approve the nutrient (phosphorus), dissolved oxygen, sediment and temperature TMDLs established for waters and sources within Idaho. The revised version of these TMDLs was submitted on June 29, 2004. In a separate action, EPA will also be approving the TMDLs for these pollutants which have been established by ODEQ for the Oregon portion of this reach of the Snake River.

This action approves five nutrient and sediment TMDLs, two dissolved oxygen TMDLs and one temperature TMDL for segments listed on Idaho's 1998 303(d) List. In addition, it approves 8 TMDLs for segments currently not listed on the 303(d) List but which were determined during the development of the TMDL not to meet applicable water quality criteria. These TMDLs include 6 TMDLs for temperature and two TMDLs for dissolved oxygen. EPA understands that these latter waterbody segments would have been included on the State's 303(d) lists had the State been aware, at the time the lists were compiled, that these segments were impaired. The information contained in this TMDL demonstrates that these non-listed waters are in fact water quality limited segments in need of a TMDL.

The specific segments for which TMDLs are being approved for each pollutant are identified in the following table.

Snake River Waterbody Segment	Listings Addressed	Unlisted Pollutants Addressed
Oregon Border To Boise River (Segment extends from RM 451.3 to RM 396.4. The TMDL addresses the portion from RM 409 to RM 396.4.)	Nutrients (Phosphorus) Sediment Dissolved Oxygen	Temperature
Boise River to Weiser River (RM 396.4 to RM 351.6)	Nutrients (Phosphorus) Sediment	Dissolved Oxygen Temperature
Weiser River to Scott Creek (RM 351.6 to RM 347)	Nutrients (Phosphorus) Sediment	Dissolved Oxygen Temperature
Scott Creek to Brownlee Dam (RM 347 to RM 285)	Nutrients (Phosphorus) Sediment Dissolved Oxygen	Temperature
Brownlee Dam to Oxbow Dam (RM 285 to RM 272.5)	Nutrients (Phosphorus) Sediment	Temperature
Oxbow Dam to Hells Canyon Dam (RM 272.5 to RM 247)		Temperature
Hells Canyon Dam to Salmon River (RM 247 - RM 188)	Temperature	

Your submittal also included a Water Quality Management and Implementation Plan for the Snake River - Hells Canyon Reach. EPA currently has no duty to approve or disapprove implementation plans under Section 303(d) of the Clean Water Act (CWA) and therefore, EPA is not taking action on these Implementation Plans. However, we believe implementation is the critical next step for realizing improvements in water quality called for in the TMDL and look forward to seeing the more detailed implementation plan and the implementation of measures outlined in the plan.

EPA has concluded consultation with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration - Fisheries (NOAA - Fisheries) and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) pursuant to Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act. Through this consultation, EPA found that this approval action would have no effect on listed species or their critical habitat. Both NOAA - Fisheries and FWS have agreed with this determination.

EPA has appreciated the opportunity to work closely with your staff throughout the development of these TMDLs and your staff's efforts to provide timely responses to EPA's questions. We look forward to our continued partnership in the implementation of measures addressed through these TMDLs.

By EPA's approval, these TMDLs are now incorporated into the State's Water Quality Management Plan under Section 303(e) of the CWA. If you have any questions please feel free to contact me at (206) 553-1261 or Don Martin of my staff at (208) 665-0458.

Sincerely,


Michael G. Gearheard, Director
Office of Water & Watersheds

cc: Craig Shepard, IDEQ
Marti Bridges, IDEQ
Greg Aldrich, ODEQ
Dick Nichols, ODEQ
Tonya Dombrowski